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**BHARATIYA VIDYA STUDIES**

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**THE  
CREATIVE ART OF LIFE**

**—Studies in Education**

By  
**K. M. MUNSHI**



**PUBLISHED FOR  
BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN**

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# I

## INTRODUCTORY

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is not an institution. It is a movement, a cause. Its objects, from the very start, were to encourage the study of all aspects of Indian Culture; to help in its re-integration; and to study and spread the fundamentals of Aryan Culture. In my address, delivered when the Bhavan was founded, I stated:

“For many years it had been the dream of the Sahitya Sansad to crystallize its work into a centre in which the ancient learning and modern intellectual aspirations of this land might combine to create a new literature, a new history and a new Culture. The Bhavan will be an association which will organise active centres where ancient Aryan learning is studied and where modern Indian Culture is provided with a historical background.”

Since then the Bhavan has made rapid progress. It has recently reorganised its institutions and is starting a College of Arts and an Institute of Science. The question, therefore, naturally arises whether the spirit and technique of education in the institutions of the Bhavan should be the same as in other institutions.

The stand of the Bhavan in this respect is very clear. It stands for an essentially Indian education. Such an education must necessarily follow the lines of our own Culture. This Culture is not a mere matter of religion, not a particular social system, nor a philosophy by it-

self. It is a way of life. Through and in it alone can our destiny be realised.

The objects of the Bhavan embody the educational ideals which are inherent in this Culture, and which can be re-integrated to suit modern conditions only if it follows these ideals. Without them, education is useless and sterile. Only if they are followed, will education be creative and India grow stronger.

When these ideals of Bharatiya Shiksha or Indian Education were drafted—and I had some share in it—the theory and practice of Creative Education both in ancient and modern India and abroad, were drawn upon. With the growing number of teachers and students in the Bhavan it is not possible for me to come into close touch with them. I, therefore, decided to place before a wider audience what I conceived to be the true meaning and effect of the objects of the Creative Education referred to as Bharatiya Shiksha.

I have for thirty years some contact with education in many of its aspects; with the University of Bombay, with Colleges, High Schools, and Pathashalas; with institutions like the David Sassoon Industrial School, the Chembur Home Vocational School and the Mansukhlal Chhaganlal School of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. Though not a teacher myself, I have come into contact with teachers of all grades. But more than that I have been a typical product of our university education; and it has taken me years of effort to get rid of its grip and realise the importance of a truly creative education.

The education which India has been receiving for the last one hundred and fifty years is neither Indian nor creative. Even at its best it is not Western. It started as a political device and has been continued as a political

**makeshift.** Macaulay, when he founded modern education in India, frankly wanted convenient instruments of British rule.

The object did succeed. It has created a class of English-knowing Indians who know little of India except through their masters' eyes. They have been rightly described as the "mānas-putras" of the British—children born of the British mind. This class basking in the sunshine of foreign rule, which they considered "a dispensation of a wise Providence", looked upon their own people as more or less inferior, uncivilised people.

Modern education in India has been a failure. The extreme emphasis which it lays on the mastery of English exposes its true intent. An Indian, passing through a University, becomes a suitable middle-man with an outlook and ways congenial to his foreign masters. As lawyer, doctor, scientist or businessman, he helps the British to make him forget the morally devastating effects of foreign rule.

English no doubt is the predominantly international language; through its medium we can contact the rest of the world. But this is an incidental advantage. In fact, an intensive study of English has denied to our souls the sap which they would have otherwise drawn from the soil of Indian Culture through the use of our own languages.

The second feature of modern education in India is that it is purely informative. It is also a feature of recent educational tendencies in Europe and America. A graduate, therefore, has to grow a waste-basket of useless bits of information. The only effect is harmful; it initiates the student in second-hand Westernism.



Another and the most dangerous feature of modern education in India is its tendency to induce an inferiority complex in us. It is the legacy of the missionary zeal which, in the early days of British rule, tried to foist a crude European Culture on our ancient and highly developed Culture. This was done in the belief that the souls of Indians, who were taken to be savages, had to be saved. English, as a result, became the symbol of a new aristocracy and trousers the badge of civilisation. In some decades of the last century eating beef and drinking wine were considered as signs of being above the level of the uncivilized rest. If truth had to be inculcated, we were referred to Washington, as if we had no Harishchandra. If persistency had to be admired, one had to go to Robert Bruce and his spiders, as if we had no Pratap and no Guru Govind Singh. If we were taught anything about our own country and Culture, it was with an arrogant and hypercritical attitude. And our present generation of educationists brought up under these influences have not yet been able to get rid of them fully.

Teaching of Indian history is not only unhistoric but positively criminal. Histories of India, till very recently, were written and taught from a foreign point of view. We were told about foreign invasions of India but nothing about how we resisted them. We were told about the evils of our social system; we were not taught, as we should have been, how this system came into existence and how it happened to be the most tenacious social organisation, which, while it protected life and culture, also developed an elasticity unknown in other parts of the world. We had pages on Alexander's campaign in India; but we were told next to nothing of the contemporary empire of the Shishunagas and the Nandas, and the

greatest Culture of the age which it represented. We are given lurid details of the palace intrigues of the Sultans of Delhi; but we are not enlightened as to how, for centuries, heroes and heroines, resisted the might of the Central Asian invaders who flung themselves on this land. We are told of the "Mutiny" of 1857—the British lieutenants' word for the event—and of how the brave foreigners crushed it. It is only outside our Universities that we learn that it was a great national revolt, when Hindus and Muslims rallied round the last Mogul Emperor of Delhi, the national symbol, to drive out the foreigner. No wonder the product of modern education knows nothing of his country's greatness. It is intended that he should not know it.

Creative Education must make our young man really Indian, strong, true and free—an embodiment of the finest in his Culture; an authentic representative of India, the teacher of nations, which has a message for humanity.

In order to discover the fundamental of such an education we must begin the search with an entirely fresh outlook. In doing so we must take the stand-point of India; we must evoke the genius of our Culture. We may not be partial to ourselves, but in any event we must be true to ourselves. We must get rid of inferiority complex. By the Self alone, can the Self be raised.

In approaching the objects of *Bharatiya Shiksha*, therefore, we must first consider India. If we want to raise the world, like Archimedes we must have a place to stand on. That place can only be Bharata—the Motherland. In the first instance, therefore, the teacher and the student must become 'India-conscious'.

## II

### THE INDIAN STUDENT

The first condition of a sound education of the creative type is to take our stand on India. In its political aspect, this stand may be called national. But Indian nationalism is not a narrow political creed as in Europe. Politics, after all, is a restricted sphere of life. Our nationalism is a group sentiment of wider significance. It is the sentiment of devotion and sacrifice which surrounds Bharata, the Motherland.

I once described this national standpoint as follows:-

“To those of us who have faith in Indian nationalism, India is the Mother, not an estate to be divided. Its driving force has been the joy of suffering for the sake of the Mother, the divine *ananda* of self-immolation for her freedom, the bliss of union in death with the forbears of our race who have done so before us. We have felt almost physical delight in the touch of the soil from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin—the land of the Mother; in the kisses blown by the winds from over Indian seas; in hearing Indian speech, music and poetry, wherever found; in seeing the familiar sites, habits and manners of life in every corner of it. The pride in the Mother’s past, the anguish at her present servitude, the passion for her future glory have been the breath of our life. To us nationalism is the realization of the Mother in the country; the contemplation, adoration and service of the Motherland as Divinity.”

Creative Education must take its stand firmly on India the Mother, on the living Nation whose soul is inspired by a unique Culture. It cannot therefore accept the aims, ideals and methods of the anglicized nineteenth century. Nor can it ignore the spirit, the history and the destiny of our people. It cannot make a fetish of our past, neither can it be blind to the fact that the present and the future are, and must be, the outcome of our past.

India cannot accept the present-day Westernistic education, organisation and equipment forced on her by Britain. Unlike the imitative Japanese we do not desire to reproduce in ourselves a second-hand energy, outlook, and technical skill. Just as we decline to accept for the Motherland the political status of an outlying dependency of the British Empire, so must we refuse to be the repository of stale ideas and methods of the decadent West. India must be Indian and not a second-hand West. The education that is to create our new generation, must, therefore, be built on the foundation of our own Culture. For, it is a way of life characteristically ours. It is *Dharma* not in the sense of religion—a mere theological dogma, cult or ritual, but in the sense of an all-pervading force which upholds life.

Indian Culture, again, is not merely Aryan Culture but very much more, though the latter glistens like a thread of gold through many and varied elements which now go to make up our way of life. We cannot repudiate the Gandhara art because of Greek influence. We cannot disown the Taj Mahal because of its Islamic inspiration. We cannot reject the art, the manners, the institutions which Hindu-Muslim adjustments have given birth to. We cannot even throw off the Western influences

and institutions which have grown into our life. Our Culture is a living force. It absorbs alien elements when necessary, but transmutes them into a new pattern of homogeneous richness. It is, therefore, a tremendous force of power and beauty which made us what we are in the world of today, and will make us what we want to be in the world of tomorrow.

A student under the influence of Creative Education is the crucible through which the Culture has to pass in order to acquire fresh vigour. To secure the best of students for this vital process, the *Smritis* enjoin that learning shall be imparted to whoever seeks it without receiving monetary return.

The modern world under Westernistic influence, has elevated money into a divinity. Men of learning think in terms of money and a rising cost of living. Entry into educational institutions, more often than not, depends upon the fees that a student can afford. Our Universities impose handicaps on education which would be considered criminal in any society where values were not hopelessly perverted. The cost involved in luxurious buildings, excellent furniture, costly equipment and security deposits, place education beyond the reach of the deserving poor student.

It has not yet come to be recognised that it is the fundamental duty of the State in India, as elsewhere, to provide the costliest education, free to the deserving student. In the meantime, however, we must, as far as our means permit, uphold the first principle that no promising young man of character who believes in India and her Culture should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

A student is promising only if he is proud of his country and anxious to learn what his Culture stands for. He would aspire to learn, to grow and to achieve. He would not be blinded by arrogance and think that he had done wonders or that he alone could do them. Such a student has no future. Towards all great things and men, a true student must be reverential; towards teachers, respectful; towards knowledge, humble. He must have the spirit of Arjun, the true student, "I am Thy pupil: I have come to Thee: Give me Thy commands."

### III

## THE INADEQUACY OF MODERN EDUCATION

Modern education in India, as elsewhere, is growing more and more informative. More attention is paid to the learning of facts rather than the development of the mental faculties. A student going up for matriculation, is, for instance, taught scraps of scientific knowledge; disconnected items of history, a little literature and elementary mathematics. He is expected to cram up bits of information within a given time and when required, throw the required bits out at the examination. Our Universities protest against cramming and encourage it at the same time.

Creative Education takes a contrary view. The value of education lies in cultivating all the faculties of the student and making him fit for the eventualities and relations of life. Unfortunately the Universities lay down the content of our education. We cannot change it by voluntary effort. We can only change its method, spirit and goal.

During the last hundred years several attempts have been made to alter, not only the method, spirit and goal but also the content of our education. Under the inspiration of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Lala Munshiram, later Swami Shraddhanand, founded the *gurukula* system. When the movement against the partition of Bengal was at its height, Shri Aravind made a short-lived attempt at founding a system of national education. The third ex-

periment was made by Mahatma Gandhi when he founded the Gujarat Vidyapith at Ahmedabad.

But the education given by our Universities held the Indian mind in its grip. Without it, the doors of the government service and the professions were banned. The people, therefore, preferred the officially recognized form of education, and none of the three experiments took root. Financial support was attracted to each, not in the interests of education but only because of the religious or political cause which the founder represented.

The fact, therefore, must be accepted that our Universities have an established place in the life of our people. A parallel system based on voluntary effort cannot take root. And even if a national Government comes into existence the Westernised mind of our present educationists will impose a barrier against a complete Indianisation of the spirit which rules our Universities. But a new outlook can certainly alter the objective and methods of education in our institutions.

Creative Education which draws its sustenance from our Culture, is on firm ground. It is formative in character, it rejects mere acquisition of knowledge, and recognises that self-discipline and consecration are necessary to enable a student to develop a personality which grows as he grows older.

The deterioration of education all the world over is mainly due to electivism. This word connotes that all subjects have an equal educational value. In modern educational systems, it has transferred the emphasis from classical and historical studies to experimental and social sciences. This movement is not restricted to India; we are only aping Western fashions in education. It is the off-spring of Westernism—the way of life evolved in



Europe as a result of materialistic tendencies, which has made a fetish of experimental and social sciences.

No doubt science has been making rapid progress, and it is necessary for every educated man to possess technical knowledge. The needs of national survival also renders it imperative that we must have scientific equipments of the latest type and the capacity to develop them so as to be abreast of other nations. But that is no reason why we should sell our souls to Westernism by accepting electivism in our educational system.

As a result of electivism being popular multiple courses are laid down in several varieties of subjects. The underlying assumption is that a knowledge of elementary chemistry has the same formative value for the student as the study of a literary masterpiece or the history of India, Greece or Rome. It was once seriously contended, in the University of Bombay that the study of the mother tongue was superfluous. Indian history, a study of which has so great a formative value, is being replaced by that of world history. It is forgotten that mechanical and uninspiring memorising of a host of facts relating to other lands and peoples, cannot have the same value for the Indian student as the history of his own land.

Electivism goes further. It claims that the teacher or the parent can decide whether a child, in his teens, is fit to take up arts, science, commerce, or law. The bifurcation, which at one time was at the post-intermediate stage, is now being pushed back to the matriculation stage; attempts are made to push it even still further, to the extremely unripe stage of the fourth standard. The result is that the organic unity of education, provided by a minimum general course of studies has been disappearing.

Modern education, in consequence, has largely ceased to be formative. It fails to teach permanent values to man and only arms him with more effective weapons. A man educated under this system may not be a man of culture despite being equipped with scientific knowledge and skill. He is generally, an under-developed human though a super-developed mechanic; a technological creature. His interests are narrow. He is trained to look at life from the angle of his special subject which he has chosen or which is chosen for him. He has no equipment for a complete life, his moral values are warped.

Such men have built up the militant organisation of materialism and developed a characteristic way of life, Westernism. They find in snout and sensation the joy of life. They have destroyed the sanctity of home and stood for easy and swift divorce. They deride self-discipline, for otherwise they cannot justify their lack of responsibility. They scorn moral values and the possibility of a higher destiny for man. They admit nothing higher than the knowledge which subserves the immediate practical ends of changing externals. Such men have staged purges, mass murders, Belsen horrors, the wicked displacement of men, women and children by millions. Where they have not destroyed, they have established soulless regimentation. They have thus forced on the world a moral crisis.

If this crisis has to be tided over, the world must go back to formative education. At the early college stage, intensive study of definite subjects of purely cultural interest are necessary to make the student responsive to the higher values of life.

This is what Creative Education aims at.

## IV

### FORMATIVE EDUCATION

It was recognised by Indian experts from the earliest times that education must be primarily formative. But for this character, the magnificence, continuity and vitality of Indian Culture would not have been possible.

What is formative education? It is a process whereby the student creates himself; a process of creative self-sculpture. It is an art by which life-energy is so shaped and developed that with every effort the artist attains a higher stage of self-fulfilment.

Every man feels himself inadequate, incomplete and unhappy. Self-fulfilment implies

(1) a sense of completeness, freedom and growing perfection;

(2) a capacity which brings love and achievement in a greater measure;

(3) a strength which rises superior to human weakness; and

(4) an increasingly correct perspective of the unity and goal of life.

If education is creative self-sculpture, the would-be artist is the student. Like all aspiring artists, therefore, he must acquire three qualifications, viz.,

(1) the knowledge of the materials he is working with;

(2) the vigour to acquire the craftsmanship by persistent and enthusiastic effort; and

(3) the view of the final pattern which he has to produce.

Unfortunately in the art of self-sculpture, the aspiring artist is a fresh young man of unformed habits. During this age he is generally denied the atmosphere of a home where parents practise idealism and teach consecration. The material with which he is to work is also his own individual nature of which he has little or no knowledge. The vigour and enthusiasm required to learn the art is, more often than not, dissipated by Westernistic influences, which have taught him to look to self alone and to mistake irresponsibility for strength. And worst of all, he has no pattern to work upto; and if he has one at all, it is generally wrong.

Creative Education must take into account these difficulties and provide three essential conditions.

First, it must sharpen the instruments of knowledge and train the student to precision, analysis, concentration and responsiveness to noble impulses.

Second, It must train him to coordinate his faculties for concentrated work.

Third, It must train him to express himself under the guidance of teachers and the inspiration of masters in the arts of self-sculpture who have moulded the culture of his land.

These conditions are only satisfied if the ground is prepared by an intensive study of the life-stories of national heroes; of the history and culture of his country; and of literary masterpieces.

The fundamental postulates of Creative Education are:

First, Every man has his individual nature which circumscribes the nature and scope of his possibilities.

Second, This nature is a composite product of his individual talents and aptitudes; his heredity and environ-

ments; the associations which spring from his relations to his society and his country; the imponderable inferences of his soil, of the sights, sounds and habits of his native land, and above all, of the Culture to which he is born.

These factors are not all-apparent, but all the same, they form part of his sub-conscious nature. Creative Education, therefore, takes its stand on the fact that nothing alien to the individual nature of a student can be taught. A teacher is not a drill instructor. He is not a task-master. He can be a guide and only lead forth the talents of the student. He can encourage his efforts to be an artist of self-sculpture. He can by precept, example, atmosphere and emphasis evoke the spirit of creative art in the student.

Every man, therefore, is bound by his individual nature. It is the marble which he has to carve. Its possibilities can be brought out, its grains smoothened, and its contours shaped to beauty. But its character and possibilities must limit his creative efforts. When the teacher recognises this fact his attempts to influence these efforts will bear fruit.

The grains and possibilities of the granite are mainly the products of cultural forces operating upon the individual through heredity, environments and experience. The first step, therefore, in Creative Education is to teach the student to study, express and live upto the permanent values of his native Culture.

The Indian Culture is not the same thing as the material equipment of life in India, which is civilization. Cultural values are permanent; they are an end in themselves. Civilisation is the garb of life; only the means to lead an efficient life. We are superior to Shri Rama-

chandra in civilisation. We travel in aeroplanes; he travelled in canoes or on foot. But in absolute values, in truth, in idealism, in character, in the beauty with which human relations were maintained, he would be a bold man indeed who will say he is superior to Shri Rāmchandra.

Each nation has its distinctive culture which forms the source of its strength. Our Culture is an organic growth, native to the soil, history and the central ideas round which the national life has revolved for generations. Many educated Indians once tried to ape British dress, manners, and habits; some of them do so still. But they have failed in their attempt to force an alien culture upon themselves or others. Only when they sought self-fulfilment by living up to the values of Indian culture did they become true to themselves and succeed in giving strength to the group-life.

Shri Aravinda spent his growing years in England imbibing the best in Westernism. But soon Indian Culture asserted itself. He gave up foreign dress and ways of living. He studied Indian languages and literature. And only when he tried to perfect himself in the art of creative life peculiarly Indian, that he became a great apostle of modern Indian nationalism, a great living Indian thinker, and a Yogi.

Gandhiji was educated for the Bar in England. But his sub-conscious self declined to take to Westernism. He had to recapture the fundamentals of Indian Culture for himself before he became the architect of resurgent India, challenged Westernism, and stood out as a supreme artist of creative life-energy.

Formative education in India therefore must follow the lines of our Culture. Any Foreign Culture as an educative force is full of danger.

## V.

### A CHALLENGE TO WESTERNISM

Creative Education in India must accept the challenge of Westernism.

The basis of Westernism is materialism. It is a way of life entirely different from Indian Culture, the way of our life. It is based on individual self-indulgence and collective greed, fear and hatred. It revolves round the central idea that a man is no more than his needs and passions; that an organised attempt to satisfy them is the prime motive in life. It has produced dictatorships, class wars and totalitarianism. It has organised materialism in a sort of militant Church. It has fostered revolutionary wars, and the psychological and physical rape of humanity on a colossal scale. It has discarded self-discipline as an essential factor in human development and denied supremacy to the Moral Order. It has destroyed the sanctity of marriage and domestic life. It has mobilised man's capacity to hate and has produced domestic maladjustments, national hatreds and world exploitation. The world has no meaning for it except as a field for the organised gratification of appetites.

A Westernist—a person steeped in Westernism—believes in nothing beyond the limits of his sense-perceptions, which he calls knowledge. He only believes in change from without. His only faith is that every ill can and will be cured by external revolution. If he can

radically and swiftly reorganise the environments and change the system of production and distribution the world will be a paradise overnight. There need be no art of creative self-culture patiently pursued. Put the world upside down and all that one wants will be forthcoming.

This is the end for which Westernism is striving. Its votaries believe that this end justifies all means including violence, baseness, treachery, poison, suppression of individual life, domestic sanctity and national independence. They have an implicit faith that at some time or the other their methods, based on force and fraud, will alter ego-tism, brutishness, violence and untruth in men.

The only permanent values which they recognise is their faith in change and their conviction that whosoever believes in anything else is an escapist, a reactionary or an anti-revolutionary and must be eliminated by all means.

Under the influence of Westernism, education naturally is not formative but informative and coercive. There is no individual growth, only patternisation. The teacher and the taught are either a drill instructor and a recruit, or a policeman and a criminal. And the pattern has to be laid down by those in political power and enforced by the might of the state. Individuality of the student has to be crushed into shape. There can be no art of self-sculpture; no liberty to develop oneself on the lines of one's own nature; no duty to be true to himself; no inalienable *svabhava*. His is to do and die; to fly an aeroplane, to discover a deadly poison, to search a deadlier ray so that those who are his masters might enslave the rest.



Indian Culture is a challenge to Westernism. It recognises three fundamental and inalienable positions.

First, Every man has his own individual nature, *Swabhāva*.

Second, Self-fulfilment for him is only attainable on the lines of its own law, or *swadharma*.

Third, Self-fulfilment for him lies in co-ordinating his faculties under the impelling urge of this law by a course of self-discipline and thereby attaining an integration of all his powers which we call personality.

The faith of Indian Culture is clear. The destiny of man lies in his perfection by individual growth. External changes are useful only to the extent to which they secure conditions in which such growth becomes easy. Ends cannot justify means. Ends and means are one and inseverable; a mere pursuit of truth as one sees it. This pursuit alone invests a human being with dignity and freedom. The changes inspired by greed, lust, fear and hate or achieved by fraud or force, are self-destructive.

This faith determines the scope of Creative Education. The primary task is to find the *swabhāva* of the student and then to develop and purify it. A mere change in the outward conduct of the student without corresponding inner change leads nowhere. His powers and faculties must, therefore, be stimulated so that he can express his life-energy with power and beauty on Indian lines.

In order to achieve this result the student must become an active centre of cultural reintegration.

The process of cultural re-integration is like the process of nutrition which regenerates the living tissues from day to day. A student of Culture first studies it and be-

comes a reception centre. He then absorbs its finest elements, if the culture is not alien. This makes him true to himself, his country and his culture. He, in the next stage, tries to live upto them under the conditions of his age. As soon as he does this, he becomes an active centre of reintegration. He radiates the permanent values of his culture; influences his environments; and produces a healthy renaissance by establishing contact with alien influences.

He then grows rich in personality and dynamic effectiveness. And the Culture passing through the crucible of the student's individual nature, will be an organic creation fresh with new life and tenacious and powerful with its ancient strength. This is re-integration.

Changes in the environments, or substitution of one set of environments by another—whether social, economic or political—cannot transform the nature of the individual. That can only be done by creative educational treatment.

## **VI.**

### **GROWTH OF PERSONALITY**

The fundamental position of Creative Education can be shortly summarised in two propositions.

First, Each individual has an individual nature. For him, the highest law is to express it through thought, word and deed which are compact and intrinsically his own. And his highest destiny is to be prepared to die in order to fulfil the law of his being.

Second, Education to be truly creative must make the student more and more of himself and teach him to realise his possibilities to the fullest, and so, to fulfil himself. In this way, his personality will grow from strength to strength producing the highest results from his relation to life.

It is an error to suppose that a man is truly educated, because he is a good scientist or a literary man though a bad husband; because, he is a capable lawyer though a bad citizen; because, he is a good patriot but a moral wreck. Human life is one. It cannot be divided into compartments. And no one can evade his responsibility to life as a whole by claiming that he is devoted to a part of it.

Creative Education must, therefore, take into account not only the complete growth of the student but the totality of his relations. Life-energy is one torrent and its

volume and intensity can be increased only by treating the whole of it.

Westernism encourages the dispersal of powers rather than their synthesis and integration. But the dynamic one-pointedness of all the powers of a man is the first sign of a growing personality. Power, fame, wealth, position and love appear to be different objectives. But in reality it is accident which makes one rich, the other poor; one powerful; the other weak. But barring luck, the chance never comes to the man whose powers have not been trained to one-pointed, concentrated work.

A valuable training, in the first instance, is to learn the art of concentrating creative energy. One may then use it to attain wealth, position, fame or love, but may or may not attain it. When the art of concentration is developed, the personality grows richer; and in consequence, greater becomes the possibility of acquiring one or all of the objectives. But whether they come or not, self-fulfilment which is an absolute value in life will certainly come. On the other hand a man, in spite of spectacular success, when denied self-fulfilment will always be left with a poignant sense of self-frustration. He will be a failure.

This personality only comes to the man who acquires the strength to say 'no' to things which do not follow the lines of his individual nature and are not the outcome of his own *swadharma*, the law of his being. In old days an orthodox Brahmin, narrow in the modern sense, would refuse to take tea with a European employer, even if it brought promotion. He had the strength to live upto his conviction. His horizon was limited, but he had the power to resist what he thought was non-self. Now, due to

Westernism, we know not how to draw the line between self and non-self.

To resist non-self is to stand firmly to what one considers his truth. This is the first step towards developing personality. Unfortunately we are in an age of collective slogans. We are swept off our feet by the latest fashion or cry. We have lost the courage to find our own truth or to stand by it. Naturally our personality remains stunted.

A student who wants to develop his personality must first "be". At all times he must remain true to himself. This truth comes only to him who develops conscientiousness and purity in all his relations in his family life, in his studies, in his sports, in his attempts to serve the Motherland and to live upto our Culture. When he approaches life in this way he will have begun to learn the art of life and the skill to make the world his own.

## VII

### SANSKRIT AS AN INDISPENSIBLE FACTOR IN CULTURAL RE-INTEGRATION

Education which does not draw its sustenance from our Culture brings no strength. It is illusory glitter and fraught with danger to the student and the generation in which he is born.

Creative Education in India, therefore, must not only involve familiarity with our past but a study of some aspect of our Culture. Then the student will know how it came into existence and what it represents. He will then be able to absorb and live it; and in trying to live it, he will recapture for it fresh vitality to suit modern needs.

“It will therefore be the object of the *Karmayogin*” writes Shri Aravinda “to read the heart of our religion, our society, our philosophy, politics, literature and jurisprudence, science, thought, everything that was and is ours, so that we may be able to say to ourselves and our nation ‘This is our *dharma*’. We shall review European civilisation entirely from the standpoint of Indian thought and knowledge and seek to throw off from us the dominating stamp of the Occident; what we have to take from the West we shall take as Indians. And the *dharma* once discovered, we shall strive our utmost not only to profess but to live in our individual actions, in our social life, in our political endeavours.”

To understand, to recapture and live upto the best in our Culture, it is necessary for a student to discover for himself the Aryan discipline, character and outlook; to wrest the secrets of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, *Gītā*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Dhammapada*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*, not merely in knowledge but in action; and to find a solution of our present problems in their light.

The Aryan discipline, character and outlook, the secrets of the *Upanishads* and the *Gītā*, the essential part of our Culture, are the noblest heritage of man.

They are a part of the world's treasure-house of scriptures. They teach *Sanātana-dharma*; the law eternal; 'wisdom uncreate, the same now as it ever was, and the same to be ever more' as St. Augustine put it.

We find the echo of this wisdom in the teachings of Christ and St. Paul; of St. Augustine, a Kempis and the Christian mystics. We find it in the life and teachings of many saints all over the world, in the doctrines of Sufism and other cults in Islam. They have influenced the life and thought of many foreigners prominent among them being Fichte, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Schelling, Emerson, Bergson, Keyserling, Aldous Huxley; of world groups like the followers of Theosophy, Christian Science and the Moral Re-Armament Movement.

The *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Bhāgavata* are the eternal epics instinct with life just as Plutarch's *Lives*, the *Iliad*, the *Divine Comedy*; a source of inspiration for all.

These are the sources of Indian Culture. They have inspired Indians from generation to generation. They have created in India a characteristic way of life. They

teach the value of the absolute integration of the human personality and a World Order based on moral values.

The world today stands split between those who stand for these values and those who do not. In this eternal war between Light and Darkness, between the *Devas* and the *Asuras*, there are no cross sections, no frontiers of race religion or dogma. But we have inherited them under a primary obligation to preserve and if need be to fight and die for them so that mankind may win through to Light.

Sanskrit, again, has been the principal instrument through which millions have organised themselves into a nation in India; and it is today the greatest cultural influence unifying us.

India is not a geographical expression. It rests on no mere physical or utilitarian basis. It is a living nation expressing a living culture and brought into existence by millions *willing* themselves into nationhood. This faculty to *will* ourselves into a nation arises from the heritage of art and literature, from the way of life; from traditions and memories of collective exploits and sufferings; from associations, idioms, imagery and literature, thoughts, aspirations and urges—all commonly shared through a long series of collective actions.

Sanskrit has been the greatest treasure-house of this heritage.

For the last three thousand years Sanskrit has been the most powerful linguistic, literary and cultural influence in India. From before the dawn of history upto 1300 A.D. it was our medium of higher expression. The *Prakrits* and the *Apabhramshas* spoken in India to the north of the Krishna were its variants. During the period of the Sultanate of Delhi and the Mogul Empire the official



language of courts in some parts of the country was Persian. Sanskrit, however, dominated learning and literature throughout the country. Vrajabhasha, the popular literary language in North India upto the advent of the British, was largely Sanskritic and the other languages were closely allied to it. Hindi was evolved from Vrajabhasha by a mixture of Persian.

Since 1857, Sanskrit has exercised the largest influence in the country. All our Indian modern languages, except high Urdu and Pushtu, have developed richness and variety with the aid of Sanskrit.

In 1931 out of about 33 crores of people in India, 25.5 crores spoke languages of the Sanskritic family 4.5 crores spoke languages like Telugu, Kanarese and Malayalam which were predominantly Sanskritic; and 2 crores spoke Tamil, which is mixed with Sanskrit. In the Hindi-Hindustani belt, the language spoken outside town areas like Delhi, Lucknow and Lahore, has a large admixture of Sanskrit words. Even Urdu, wherefrom words of Indian origin are scrupulously eliminated by purists, has a considerable element of Sanskrit.

If by national language we mean the language which strengthens our will to nationhood, Sanskrit is our national language. If India has to continue to be a nation with a soul, Sanskrit must be drawn upon for inspiration. Creative Education must, therefore, involve at some stage or the other an intensive study of Sanskrit.

The study of other languages and literatures should not be excluded. But if an Indian neglects the study of Sanskrit or failing it the study of a Sanskritic language of India, the spirit of India's past would be a sealed book to him. He will never be a live centre of Indian Culture.

## VIII

### **SANSKRIT AS A FACTOR IN FORMATIVE EDUCATION**

The study of Sanskrit need not involve the mastery of grammar. An elementary knowledge is sufficient. What is required is the general knowledge of the history of its literature; a familiarity with the classical masterpieces, if necessary with the aid of translations in an Indian language; and lastly, an intensive study of a few masterpieces.

It is further believed that a student going up for science or technical course does not need Sanskrit. Why? Is not scientist a man? Has he no need to appreciate beauty or philosophy without which life is a burden? Should he deny himself the art of making love or building a beautiful home or elevating all relations of life into a harmony? Will his soul never aspire to heroism, consecration or self-fulfilment?

Science and technical skill are equipment; self-sculpture on the other hand is an essential art of life, an end. And a study of Sanskrit is a basic necessity for this art.

Westernism has taught us false values. The technological creature which modern education is breeding, is the result of a wicked belief that it is not necessary for an average man to master the art of life. The truth is that scientific equipment and culture are not mutually exclusive. If the world wants to escape the horrors of the

atomic age, the scientist must be first and foremost a man of culture, an artist in self-sculpture. His vocation, to him, is but an instrument of a self-fulfilment to be attained, not with the dire weapons of an angry Jove but with the integration of a Buddha.

The destiny of man cannot be allowed to be frustrated by an exclusive emphasis on scientific knowledge and skill and a neglect of the permanent value of culture.

Creative Education must bring back the modern mind to this position. The importance of classical studies in general and the study of Sanskrit in particular, cannot be exaggerated. They give the student an insight into the permanent values of culture. It enables him to appraise works of art and literature, social and political theories and movements, individual and collective action in a proper perspective. Finally, it imparts faith in the dignity of man and the supremacy of the Moral Order. It gives a living touch with the highest vision of beauty and sublimity given to man.

Classical studies came into disrepute a little before World War I in England and America and were progressively substituted by alternative courses in sciences. This was largely due to the triumph of the machine age, which was generally held to be a flowering of human evolution. Science and vocational arts, therefore, naturally gained a disproportionate popularity. Like apes we followed suit and began to neglect the study of classics in our educational system.

The economic crisis which preceded World War I, however, undermined confidence in the belief that the empirical sciences were self-sufficient. This war left us

staggered at the unimaginable barbarities which the machine age had produced. It is now felt by thinking men that the gradual neglect of formative studies has been reducing the educated human into a savage without scruples but with weapons of illimitable destructiveness. Electivism is now being severely criticized both in America and England. Attempts are being made to prevent vocational courses from crowding out liberal studies from the curricula of schools and colleges. Education, in consequence, is being re-defined in terms of formative training.

The definition of education given by Derry, the President of Mary Grove College, Michigan, emphasizes the new point of view.

“Education means the full and harmonious development and artistically effective expression of all the seven faculties or powers of man (senses, imagination, mechanical and intellectual memory, intellect, emotions and will), to be achieved by the pupil’s own personal practice or conscious exercise of each specific power, under the guidance of teachers, and the help of divine grace, in preparation for the highest and happiest life, here and hereafter.”

The Moral Re-Armament—M.R.A,—known as the Oxford group, is a world movement which hopes to restore education and life to its older values.

In India our cultural traditions have so far exercised a restraining influence on our zeal for going in for methods which are being cast out from the West. But it must be realised that Sanskritic studies are comparatively more vital for us than classical studies in America or England. Sanskrit—this language which Sir William Jones pronounced to be more perfect than the Greek, more

copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either—is a living influence in our life. Its study is an inspiring factor in making us more Indian than what we are.

I am not indifferent to the study of modern Indian languages. I cannot be. For thirty five years now, I have given my best to Gujarati. My faith in Hindi as the national language of India is unshaken. I have admired the piquancy and raciness of Marathi and the grace of Bengali. I know the historical value of Pali and Ardhamagadhi. But as a truly formative and inspiring influence, nothing can compare with the study of Sanskrit.

## IX

### DANGERS OF A NARROW SCHOLARSHIP

Culture, so long as it is living, passes through the process of reintegration from generation to generation. But all the time it remains the same. There is no break in its self-conscious existence. Its fundamental outlook on the pattern of life does not change. Mere study of Sanskrit is, therefore, incomplete without the study of Indian Culture as a living whole.

Studies conducted under our old Pathashala system give textual knowledge, tradition and religious belief but only as a set form. It gives no connected view of the culture. No historical and critical knowledge is provided which will enable the student to distinguish between its permanent values and transient aspects. The process of absorption, in consequence, is arrested. The old forms of Culture are accepted as eternal; it is not thought of in terms of reintegration.

On the other hand modern education in India assumes that Indian culture is dead, only requiring post-mortem dissection, and that a new culture can be developed by imitating the West. No attention is paid to the importance of a ceaseless reintegration. If India is living, a nation with a distinctive culture as its soul, ceaseless integration of its culture is inevitable. Otherwise, like ancient Egypt and Greece, she would have been dead. If,

again, this re-integration is an essential factor in our development, it must be purposive and carried out by a planned effort at Creative Education.

A post-mortem examination of India's past, therefore, is not the study of her Culture. Dissection gives the body in section; it does not give the living man. Many scholars even look at our history in periods, Ancient, Mediaeval, Modern—each as a separate unit, as if the world began and ended with it. This kind of study is often dignified by the name objective or scientific. But an objective and scientific study of a living thing can be made only when it discovers the central, continuous urge of which the apparent life is a mere expression and the body but an outward symbol.

Indian Culture must be studied as an unbroken organic phenomenon as a flowing stream. Of this stream, the invasions, the rise and fall of empires, the conflict of political ambitions have been but crest waves. Foreign invasions and alien influences, like noisy tributaries and turbid rivulets, have joined it at several points of time. But it has never ceased to flow as one stream. Its waters have been flowing between the Hindukush, the Himalayas and the sea. Its essential unity, its characteristic elements, its direction and the driving force all have remained the same. This unity and continuity have given India her individual nature. The Culture, therefore must be studied not in sections but in continuous time.

An individual episode or period must no doubt be analysed and understood, but only as an expression of the forces and processes, both physical and psychological, through which the ruling ideas of our Culture have been seeking fulfilment. Unless we go into the continuous working of

these forces and processes, our study must remain superficial, mechanical and almost meaningless.

When a catastrophe overtakes a nation and deprives it of the capacity to preserve and reintegrate its culture this flowing continuity is broken and the Culture dies, as it did in ancient Egypt and ancient Greece. Often it is not broken but is lost sight of, as when in the nineteenth century educated Indians forgot that we had anything like it. Sometimes, if the Culture is tough, the past is accepted as something permanent with a view to protect it from the onrushing catastrophe. In and after the fourteenth century, in India, the ruthless raids of the Central Asian invaders arrested life. Our universities were destroyed and the living traditions of education, scholarship and life were broken up. The cherished past was treated as all-important; the present was ignored; the future was thought of only in terms of a revival of the past. The impermanent forms of our Culture naturally came to be accepted as its permanent values. It was not an effort at reintegration but at preservation in cold storage.

Our modern scholarship, in imitation of Western scholarship, looks upon the study of Indian Culture as the study of a laboratory specimen, something dead and gone and finished which is not under an active process of reintegration.



## X

### ESSENTIAL UNITY OF INDIAN CULTURE

The battle of Taorari (1192 A.D.) in which Prithviraj fell and the Turks won cannot be understood except in the context of the Indian Culture of the period. Prithviraj was the descendant of a feudatory of what was once the mighty empire ruled by Pratiharas from Kanauj. He inherited the weaknesses of that decadent fabric and the humane and civilized traditions of Indian warfare, both of which were suddenly faced with ruthless savagery. But when he fell, the traditions were not cut short. Social and cultural urges were not dead. After his death Ranthambhor, Patan and a thousand other citadels resisted. A fiery, long drawn-out contest between foreign invaders and the heroes of the soil continued. Pratap and Shivaji were but the crest waves of the resistance of their respective epochs. The Hindu resurgence during the reign of Aurangzebe was not an isolated phenomenon, but the product of processes in operation during centuries. Britain tried to exploit the processes to its advantage; we cannot understand Akhand Hindustan and Pakistan except in terms of these processes. How can one study the battle of Taorari or the life of Prithviraj as an isolated exhibit in time and space?

We view a man's life as patched up pieces joined together as in a cinema film. We reproduce the things he

did, said or wrote, but we do not study his personality. But personality is the expression, in a limited space of time, of all the life forces and dominant ideas in the man which are largely created by the Culture which is rushing forward at every moment through time.

You or I cannot be treated as little isolated periods of existence to be studied independently. I cannot understand myself except as an expression of life-force which has been influenced by Gandhiji; shaped by some proximity to Besant, Tilak and Shri Aravinda, by an ardent admiration for Vivekanand, Dayanand Saraswati, Shri Ramakrishna, Sahajanand, by the urge provided by the *Gita* and the *Yogasutra*, and above all by my study of Indian Culture and the memories of Rishis which my mother and the *puraniks* filled me with.

But were Dayanand and Sahajanand representing Indian Culture at the dawn of the modern period like Brahma self-originated? Certainly not. Dayanand carried forward the life-work of Virjanand, Swaminarayan that of his *guru* Ramdas and through him of Ramานุ, who himself was an heir to an ancient cultural tradition.

Indian Culture must, therefore, be viewed as the movement of a Central Idea flowing through time, absorbing alien influences, some times running underground but always inspiring individuals and movements to express it under the changed conditions of their time. In each period it has expressed itself, with easily ascertainable permanence, in the life of our great men, in the output of our art and literature, in our solution of vital problems. This Central Idea is a living reality. Men have derived exquisite joy by living it. It has passed through fresh coverings of each age. These coverings, the—out-worn

sheaths—are made the objects of research by our modern scholars. But the moving reality has passed from covering to covering throwing up great men and recurring movements with every age. This reality must be studied in forces, movements, motives and ideas which have persisted through time. It must be rediscovered by each generation; and above all, lived.

When we say that India has survived we do not mean that so many million square miles have remained geologically locked up between the Himalayas and the sea. It means that the Idea controlling our Culture still provides the inspiring urge which shapes men to find self-realization in and by expressing it.

This Central Idea is that the goal of human effort is the absolute integration of the human personality.

University education, if it provides a new up-to-date sheath for the Idea, is a necessity. If it kills the Idea, it is a trap of death. For if the Idea dies, the Culture too dies, and with it the nation.

## XI

### **EXPRESSION AS A FORMATIVE PROCESS**

The principal aim of modern education in India is to discover and manipulate the forces of nature. It has, therefore, come to regard the power of expression as of secondary importance.

At one time, in Europe, Rhetoric was a subject of prime importance in all educational curricula. In India, we had an elaborate system under which the power of expression was scrupulously developed. Before World War I, even our Universities laid stress on this aspect of education. But during the last twenty years this system is being replaced. Classical and literary studies are coming to be considered unessential or out of date. The study of expression, oral or written, is often considered a waste of time.

Creative Education considers the development of the powers of expression as the greatest factor in formative training. A student anxious to acquire the art of creative self-sculpture has to fulfil two conditions.

First, he has to acquire the mastery of the finest pieces of literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres; and

Second, he has to train himself to express his feelings, thoughts and ideals by systematic efforts to copy the technique of these masters.

When a student learns the contents of a book, the literary history of its form, the biography of the author or the facts connected with the subject contained in it, his attitude is only receptive. The formative processes have not set in. But when an immortal work of beauty is intensively studied by way of analysis, repetition and reconstruction, the masterpiece, so to say, works itself in his moral and intellectual fibre, and his passive attitude disappears. Further when he is set a lesson in composition on the work, an active creative process is set in motion. He, therefore, summons the expressive art at his disposal. He passes the different elements gathered in his memory through his own imagination, and marshalls them to achieve the effect. In expressing his thoughts, feelings and images in his own words he tries to recreate the author's attitude and style. In doing so he goes through an intensive process whereby his mind, imagination and aesthetic sense is moulded.

A mere mastery of the contents of a book and its intensive study are two different things. The essence of an intensive study are the analysis of its structure; a repetition and memorising of its notable passages; discussions of its merits; class exercises written and oral; and independent compositions dealing with the text. Analysis gives an insight into the structure of expression. The repetition of favourite passages forms the taste. Criticisms of passages in accordance with well-shaped canons of style lead to the habit of precision, accuracy and methodical presentation. By imitating select passages, the power of both imagination and reasoning are trained and the secret of acquiring mastery over other minds by persuasion and eloquence, is acquired.

In this connection the greatest handicap for a fresh student is the emphasis which, at an initial stage, is often placed on the formal study of grammar. Dr. Bhandarkar's text books of Sanskrit, for instance, by their insistence on teaching rules of grammar first, ruined the popularity of Sanskritic studies in our Universities. The student is first asked to cram the rules of grammar, though at that stage he does not understand what exactly the rule is or how it is to be applied. The study of grammar must be postponed to an early familiarity with the language.

Another method of teaching texts, which deprives the study of all-formative influence, is to provide a translation or a paraphrase. Many teachers have made cheap money by providing bad translations, or worse paraphrase, and thereby supplying 'ponies', to use the college slang of America. The teacher is happy with having provided the student with a pony. The student is equally happy that he has not to walk. And naturally, the poor boy acquires neither the strength to walk nor the art of walking with grace.

For a real formative study of a literary text Mallinath's method is the best. In his commentaries on Sanskrit works, a paragraph is first taken; a brief summary of it is given; in a few words the connection with the foregoing passage is established. Then each line is taken up. The other words are given; the grammatical construction is explained; allusions, names and figures of speech are explained; parallel quotations are supplied; special beauties are pointed out; and at the end, the whole passage is again summarised.

More or less similar has been the method of prelection adopted by the Jesuits out of their world experience as educators.

1. The content of a passage is first summarised and its relation to the foregoing passage is stated.

2. Vocabulary, the grammar, the word order and subordinate connection are explained and the difficulties are solved.

3. The syntax and style are commented on.

4. Allusions, names, etc., are briefly explained.

5. A partial or complete translation or paraphrase is given.

6. The figure of speech, the quality in style are explained and artistic reproduction of the passage is given.

7. Finally, a stylistic reproduction by the student based on the passage to be studied, is insisted on.

No doubt this will throw on the teacher the burden of more diligent preparation than what the modern teacher is prepared to undertake.

A teacher may well complain that courses, these days, are so extensive that they are not capable of being taught in this way; that time is too much taken up by the variety of subjects prescribed; that there is no sufficient time left for such an intensive training. But let the truth be realised. The development of a student's faculties cannot be fully attained without an intensive study of texts involving a mastery of expression. If the teacher fails to adopt the method indicated even in parts, the student must adopt it himself.

What I have stated about classical literary masterpieces, is more true of the master-pieces in one's own language. A mother tongue is an essential part of our being. Learning expression through a study of the literary masters who have invested the mother tongue with beauty

and effectiveness is, therefore, an important step in education. An educated man is one who can speak and write his own language with accuracy and force. Indian students are at a disadvantage as they have been deprived of this basic education for a century.

Modern education has gone wrong in not realising the formative importance of literary studies. Creative Education must restore it.



## XII

### THE CREATIVE POWER OF THE RECURRING RECITAL

Language is a powerful medium through which the soul expresses itself. When it is properly used, the soul has to be in a proper trim. When we make use of accurate, effective or artistic language the soul has to go through a strenuous discipline.

When a great master of literature is intensively studied all the faculties are cultivated. In that process we self-sculpture ourselves into an artistic creation. There is no more beautiful delineation of fascinating childhood than in the *Bhāgavata*; of youth, strong and beautiful, friendship staunch and true, of love, so exquisite and enduring, as in the *Rāmāyana*; of feelings so tender and so pure as in *Sakuntala*. Whoever studies the appropriate passages, memorises them and recites them often, will be a better, stronger and nobler man. In doing so he, in his humble way, goes through the whole process which these masters went through when composing the master-pieces. He studies poetry from Vyas and Valmiki; drama from Kalidasa and Shakespeare; rhetoric from Demosthenes and Cicero. At the same time he is being shaped into being under the direct influence of these masters.

Creative education further considers it of great educative importance, that the student should become an instrument of power and beauty by being trained to recite

selected passages from immortal masters. *Swādhyāya*, the Recurring Recital, is the most formative influence whether for the young or the old. *Swādhyāya* involves,

First, The selection of a book, for the matter of that any book for recurring recital;

Second, The recitals of parts of the book every day of one's life.

Modern dictators enforce a propaganda manual for *swādhyāya*. For this purpose, Hitler prescribed *Mein Kampf* for the German Nation, and it destroyed the soul of the Germans. The Communist propaganda prescribes recurrent recitals of party catechisms. Such *swādhyāya* can make slaves and party tools. It cannot lead to self-fulfilment.

If the book selected for *swādhyāya* is an uninspiring book, the student will throw it away. If some one takes a detective novel for recurring recitals he will never read it again. It is only a work of beauty or inspiration that can have a fresh meaning and strength everytime one reads it. The work, to be a proper *swādhyāya* must appeal to the fundamental moral or aesthetic sense of man and deal with permanent values.

The recital, to be formative, must be in a very low voice. As one recites the work day after day, its phrases, idioms, imageries and outlook, slowly work their way into his every fibre. Its high aspiration and noble purpose seize him and compel him to scale increasing heights of strength and beauty. Under its influence his education will not end with his degree, but will make him a creative artist of life.

Modern education is ignorant of this method. To read a book is one thing; to study it, another; to make its

intensive study a formative influence is yet another. But to make it a work for Recurring Recital is to intensify the process of self-sculpture. *Swādhyāya*—Sacred Recital—is the essence of education; the *Gita* recognizes it as a form of self-discipline; the *Yoga-sutra* makes it one of the necessary steps for attaining self-development; and there are no better manuals of education than these two great scriptures.

We know how men all the world over have risen to self-fulfilment and greatness only by making a *swadhyaya* of the *Gita*, the *Ramayana*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Dhammapada*, the *Bible*, the *Koran* or the *Gathas*.

Gladstone read, studied and translated *Iliad* day after day for the best part of his life. Napoleon lived on Plutarch's *Lives*.

I am giving you my own experience with my *swadhyaya*, limited though it is to one scripture, the *Gita*.

“Of books, a few only attain the position of classics. Of them not more than half a dozen have come to be accepted as scriptures of the human race. Of such scriptures, this incomparable converse between God and man is pre-eminent. Edwin Arnold called it the *Song Celestial*; Humboldt characterized it as “The most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song in any known tongue”. The reasons for its pre-eminence are many.”

It is composed by Vyas Dvaipayana, the author of the *Mahābhārata*, the poet of poets and the first and foremost prophet of the human race. It contains the teaching of Shri Krishna, the greatest of masters who have attained absolute integration.

This gospel has given more than human power to countless men for the last twenty-five hundred years; to

Shankar and Ramanuja, to Jnaneshwar, Madhava and Nimbārka, Chaitanya and Vallabha; to Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Lokmanya Tilak, to Shri Arvinda and Gandhiji among the moderns.

“It has also provided the inspiration to immortal works like the *Bhagvat* and Tulsidas’s *Ramcharita Manasa* which have shaped and strengthened the eternal edifice of Indian Culture. Above all, it has a universality which embraces every aspect of human action, suits and elevates every stage of human development.

“Yet the modern educated mind in India is a timid mind. It has a subconscious feeling that if it found relying too often on the *Gita*, the possessor—the arrogant modern will be classed with the superstitious, the weak and the outworn.

“It is a real fear amongst us. But if India is to continue its triumphant march to world influence, the fear must be cast out.

“St. Paul in his letter to the Romans said: “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.” Why should any one be ashamed of the Gospel which Shri Krishna taught mankind? No man is ashamed of his learning, of his artistic gifts or of displaying power, however little it be. Why should he be ashamed of openly confessing the real source of power, the power which strengthens everyone when he is feeble, and inspires him when he is weak, upholds him when he is strong?

“When all resources fail, then, through the words of the *Gita*, God speaks:

Yeild not to impotence, Partha.

It befits thee not.

Shake off this wretched faint-heartedness,

Stand up, on, Harasser of foes.

Then fear flees. Then we recover ourselves; and like unto Arjuna, each of us can say inspired:

Here I stand firm; my doubts are fled;

I shall act as Thou biddest.

"The more desperate the situation, the greater is the power which the *Gita* reveals. This has been the experience of the strong. Why should it not be the inspiration of us, the weak?

"The strength which the *Gita* gives does not lie on the surface. It lies in real personal power; not like the power of the worldly, in apparent glitter and domination. It is the power which makes everyone, to whom it comes, a little more of himself. By and through it, the weak becomes strong, the shallow, deep; the valuable, silent; the insolent, humble; the wasted, effective. It gives the power of God to everyone that believeth; the power to arise and win glory, to overcome foes and enjoy kingship; a power higher than which no man can covet or gain.

"The power which the *Gita* gives comes not merely to individuals but to communities and nations, as well, if they could translate its message into action."\*

For *swādhyāya*, there is no nobler work as the little *Gita*. As you recite some verses either in the original or in translation, day after day, morning, noon and night when you are free, little gems of inspiring words get woven into your mind. They shape your powers of expression. They sharpen your faculties. They act as guides. They mould, they control, they recreate every impulse in you. Under their inspiration the whole life gets unconsciously sculptured into a more harmonious, more effective and a more beautiful thing.

\* Munshi, *The Experiential Approach to the Gita*

### XIII

## TEACHERS AS AN APOSTLE OF CULTURE

There is a tendency among modern teachers not to worry about the student. They make notes; deliver their discourses; go home and draw their salary. For them, the student does not exist except as an inevitable nuisance without which they cannot make a living.

Similarly, a student would be inclined to say, "I am too modern to have respect for my teacher. I have nothing to do with service. I attend the classes because the University insists upon my doing so. I am only interested in passing examinations. That I can do with anybody's assistance. What have I to do with anything else?"

Creative Education requires an entirely different relation between the teacher and the student. The teacher is not a lecturer. He is not a taskmaster, not an instructor either. He is an apostle of Culture, and as such his duty is to inspire his student to high intellectual, moral and cultural effort. He has to start the student on the road to his own perfection and sustain his enthusiasm on the journey.

The system of education, foisted on us by our foreign rulers, destroyed this outlook. The teacher became an instrument of the British. His principal function was to run educational institutions which would carry out Macaulay's objective to convert Indians into docile

subjects, useful clerks or pedagogic drudges. In the scheme the teacher was expected partly to be a hired instructor and partly a benevolent policeman.

If India is to live, this system must be scrapped. We must go back to the technique of Creative Education which India knew so well. The *guru*, in our educational system, commanded the loyalty of his students, not by knowledge alone but by the sanctity which was attached to implicit obedience and by the inspiring admiration and reverent emulation which a healthy tradition enjoined. To the curious teacher who desires a model, I can only refer to Dronacharya—the ideal eternal of the true *guru*. Modern India cannot reproduce the exact tradition but it can certainly recapture his spirit which is fundamental to all great educational systems.

The first step towards developing the *guru* attitude is for the teacher to take a personal interest in the student. It is difficult for a teacher, in these days of large classes and overburdened curricula, to find time to take a personal interest in each student. But if a creative spirit has to be introduced in education it must be done, at any rate with respect to responsive and promising students.

One principal maintained a card for each of his students in which his personal elements were noted. Whenever a student went to him, the principal, with the aid of the card, was ready to talk to the student as if all his life he had been doing nothing but thinking of that student. Our old professor of mathematics in the Baroda College, —Tapidas Kaka—knew most of the students well, treated them as his own children and aided them in all their diffi-

culties. I have known one Jesuit Father who was on friendly terms with most of his students.

Without the personal inspiration and encouragement of a *guru* the student's faculty for self-development remains stunted. The first and fundamental need of every fresh student is to admire and attach himself to somebody. Every youth is a hero-worshipper. His first hero is naturally the teacher whom he instinctively admires. If the teacher takes an interest in him, his will to self-sculpture will come into active play.

The teacher, however, can only evoke hero-worship in the student if he enters his life not by sermons but by personal example; by encouraging friendly intercourse; by inviting confidence and suggesting ways of removing his difficulties, external or psychological.

The student in his formative period has, as a rule, generous impulses and high aspirations. But he can instinctively discover whether his teacher has the soul of a hired instructor or a *guru*. If the student feels that the teacher is devoted to his subject, to his institution, and to evoking the best in the students, he will surely take to the *guru*. There is no other way to evoke this feeling than for the teacher to develop an apostolic fervour and a spirit of consecration to his life-work.

A teacher has in thought, word and deed to be the guide, philosopher and friend of his student before he can develop the *guru* attitude.

The teachers under Westernistic influence are fast becoming mere wage-earners. Some have been known to be doing commercial side-jobs, to have been spending all their energy in intriguing themselves into position of



power. The highly competitive—democratic is an inapt word—conditions under which our Universities and educational societies function at present, has placed a handicap on the teacher who devotes himself solely to his work, his subject and his student.

But we have to cry halt and restore the teacher to the dignity of an apostle to which he is entitled. It will be an unfortunate generation which will be moulded by teachers who have not developed the *guru* attitude.

## XIV

### THE STUDENT AS AN ARTIST OF SELF-SCULPTURE

If the *guru* has his duties, so has the *shishya*. The modern student suffers from vanity which prevents him from developing humility and receptivity. They are, however, the pre-conditions of self-development.

This vanity is largely the result of Westernistic influence. Over many young men, it casts a temporary spell and destroys all sense of responsibility. The 'gay dog' attitude then becomes for him a badge of superiority.

Power politics, again, have created the need for a large number of active men to carry on party propaganda and in schools and colleges it has found a cheap and easy recruiting ground for raw, unthinking partisans. To shout slogans, to run about under a belief that release of energy is organisation, to do something loud and out of the way, easily appear heroism, patriotism or service to young men scarcely out of teens. Young men can thus easily be deluded into the belief that they are making history when all that they are doing is to become the victims of a carefully planned party propaganda. A student in ignorance gives to some local party chief the loyalty which he should have given to his teacher. But the student's paramount duty is clear. He has first to go through the process of fashioning himself. The duties of a citizen can wait till he leaves college.

Education, as a creative art, must evoke the best in the student. It must develop all his faculties and set him on the path where he can master the art of self-sculpture. It, therefore, requires that the student should adopt the three essential attitudes of student-hood, reverence, the spirit of inquiry and the spirit of service.

In every man who has some cultural worth there is the honoured memory of some teacher who early in his life drew from him his admiration and reverence, and by so doing, set him on the path of self-development. This memory is a great asset in life and can only come to the student who is willing to accept the teacher's direction. The worship of the *guru* is one of the first elements of discipline. The unquestioning acceptance of *guru's* authority is, therefore, demanded not for the sake of the *guru*. It is for the sake of *shishya* himself.

No student can make any progress in developing his faculties unless his teacher comes to 'indwell' him. The place of 'indwelling' in Creative Education must be properly understood. No personality, much less the personality of a young man, can grow in isolation.

"Nothing develops personality as this influence of another personality, may be of a father, a teacher, a friend or a beloved. The stronger this personality the greater is its potency.

"Certain persons draw us out. In their presence we grow better and bigger. One word from them and we acquire strength we never had before. If such a one were with us day and night or he dwelt with us in our imagination, his inspiration would never fail us. We would then grow from strength to strength. This 'in-

dwelling' of a great personality becomes a powerful force making us more and more of 'ourselves'.

"When we are near a great personality, we not only hear him speak of men and things but also note those chance remarks which let us into secrets. We are then possessed by it. It haunts us when we leave him. Our word and deed unconsciously come to be tested on the touchstone of his personality. We are influenced not so much by what he says but by what he is.

"We are all familiar with the conscious indwelling of our favourite authors. Dumas and Hugo were my favourite authors when I was young. I read and re-read their works. Their characters were more to me than my friends, and relatives. I unconsciously adopted their attitudes and verbal tricks. I grew through these masters indwelling in me. If one abiding in us is living, the influence is still more remarkable."

A teacher will 'indwell' the student only when he develops humility towards him.

Humility as a virtue has been at a discount in this noisy, jostling modern world. The more ignorant we are, the more arrogant we become. And in this age of propaganda it is easy to accept half-truths as the last word in wisdom and thus shut the door to humility.

The student, if he wants to grow, must keep his mind open to ideas, new outlook, new doctrines. He is not the leader of today, but of tomorrow. The dogmas of his college days are sure to be out of date by the time he enters life. His first duty is, therefore, to refuse to accept ready-made views but humbly to develop a spirit of inquiry.

Nothing is a surer sign of moral decadence than the waves of collective insanity which have been sweeping over millions in the world during the last twenty years. To search for truth, to live upto the truth as one finds it, to be ready to die for it, is the only characteristic of greatness. To accept what is fashionable in our social set or in politics, in social or religious matters, to be carried away by the prevalent epidemic of slogans is to deny to human personality the dignity and independence which is not only the basis of democracy but of everything noble and free.

The student must, therefore, find the truth for himself. In his formative period he should refrain from accepting slogans, however tempting or fashionable. He must develop a spirit of enquiry. He must acquire the habit of comparing values. He must rise superior to being the blind instrument of passion, however great may be the cause which the passion is supposed to represent.

A student who tries to be a bookworm or a logical machine will scarcely learn the art of self-sculpture. The growing faculties of a young man can best be trained by expressing themselves in deed. Action, in the beginning, has naturally to take the shape of participating in the life of the institution in which he studies.

An educational institution has a soul. Around it grow the sweet memories of a student's early hopes and struggles. It is a little world by itself, and can make or mar his future. If a student participates in its corporate life, the institution will exercise through his life the same influence which the English Public Schools and Universities exercise over Britishers all over the world, and make of them the great nation that they are. For a stu-

dent, service of the institution is the first step towards the greater service to which he will be called in life.

The student has also to absorb the great traditions, the lofty examples and the noble achievements which go to make up the nation's heritage which is his. At the same time he has to translate the spirit of service by doing something effective for the Motherland, and her Culture. Unfortunately, our students become too self-centred or too much involved in agitational activities. Shouting slogans, waving flags, mass coercion of harmless citizens, as in hartals, or, even for the matter of that, courting jail by itself is not service.

Courting jail is a great discipline. But for a student, going to jail, like going to war, becomes a duty only when the Nation, at the call of its leaders, embarks on a campaign of disciplined resistance. Then only it is a part of an intensive training for higher national service. A distinction, therefore, should be made between national resistance which is service and what are mere outbursts of mass action. In the latter, only the students' ignorance and sense of service are exploited by others for party ends.

True service, apart from great national crisis where the student must render every assistance is to bring sunshine in whatever sphere he moves. It is as great a service as any man can render. An ailing sister in the house; a lonely mother who needs company; an unfortunate neighbour who needs aid; a passer-by who is in distress; a victim of crime as you go along the street; some unfortunate who is being sacrificed at the altar of a social, economic or communal evil; a riot where the innocent requires protection even at the cost of life; a city without

sweepers which wants volunteers for scavenging; a great occasion to be organised which needs service; a village needing education for social welfare; a night class where the poor have to be taught;—these are spheres of service in which every student can bring not only help but sunshine.

To be able to cheer up others, to entertain people in their moments of depression, to radiate the sunshine of strength, joy or inspiration to those who come in contact with you, these are services of the highest order. They are not easy modes of service by any means. The student will have to prepare himself for this kind of service as seriously as for an examination. It will demand a sympathetic insight into human nature, a mastery over cheering conversation and a sunny temperament.

The greatest service that the student can render is by assimilating our Culture and spreading it wherever he goes. The nightmare of inferiority complex which has settled on this land has to be lifted. The student has therefore to be a radiating centre of what is best in our Culture. His love of things Indian, can be infectious. Pride in his country's past can raise those whom he comes in contact with. His bold and courageous national attitude can create ever widening circles of strength, not only in this country but outside. He can live, move and have his being as a dynamo working for the freedom and greatness of the Mother.

But before he can do so he will have to build his strength on the Rock of Ages, the fundamentals of Aryan Culture.

## **XV**

### **SUPREME ART OF LIFE**

What is the ultimate end of Creative Education?  
What does it want to achieve?

Let me summarise. Creative Education is the art of self-sculpture. Therefore, formative education is the only real education. The programme of such an education has now been sketched.

The student must have faith in the Motherland. He must be trained to appreciate the permanent values of our Culture and try to live upto them.

Of such a training, the primary aim must be the development—

- Of the personality of the student;
- Of an all-sided responsiveness to human relations;  
and
- Of an urge to find self-fulfilment.

Of any programme of Creative Education for India,

The first step is the study of Sanskrit;

The second, is to view Indian Culture as an unbroken process;

The third, is to develop the powers of expression by a study of literary masterpieces and the recurring recital of a great work, preferably one which as a scripture has an universal appeal.



The technique of such an education must involve the adoption of the *guru* and the *shishya* attitude by the teacher and the taught.

A student is to start sculpturing himself; he is to develop a personality; he is to absorb the best in Indian Culture. But what is to be the life-pattern on which the artist is to mould and shape and chisel his life-energy? What is to be the ideal of benefaction in this case, the highest self-fulfilment at which he has to aim?

The art of Creative life-energy as already stated is so to self-sculpture oneself as to attain the progressive integration of his personality, leading ultimately to its Absolute Integration.

This Absolute Integration of the human personality has been called by different names—Kaivalya, Moksha, Nirvana, Samsiddhi, and Matsamsthāna, in Sanskrit; Tana, Wasl, and Fana in Arabic; Perfection and Union with God in English. But when analysed the substance is the same in all cases.

This Absolute Integration of the human personality is not a matter of religion, rituals or beliefs. It appears as a constant factor in all religions. It accompanies varying rituals and beliefs. But these are mere crusts; the reality is Integration. Again, it has nothing to do with the caste system, for when the Integration is established all distinctions of race and creed and sex and genus disappear. It has nothing to do with heaven or hell or other births or next worlds. It is achieved in this life, with this body, and in the daily affairs of life.

Absolute Integration lies in a man developing a dynamic personality so that all limitations disappear from this individual nature. Personality so developed reaches

out to Divine proportions, and becomes the effective instrument of a Force of illimitable Perfection.

This Art is not found in India only. Individuals cultivated it in all lands and ages. Zoraster and Marcus Aurelius, Confucius, Socrates and Christ, St. Augustine, Husain-bin-Mansoor Al Hatlaj, Thomas á Kempis are but a few of the many masters of the art. But in India, the art was perfected. Here, it produced a way of life, a magnificent literature, a resultant social system, persisting habits and traditions. Here, it was woven into the life of the millions for countless centuries, raising them above material existence into a higher, more beautiful and wider life of the spirit. Here, in consequence, men have placed a higher value on the mastery of the force of the intellect and spirit. Here they have vindicated the dignity of men by conquering from within rather than from without.

Its technique is distinctly Indian, systematized, perfected and practised on a vast scale in India. This art, however, is not parochial, sectarian, nor even national. It is a world possession.

As a technique of self-perfection, as the only pathway to self-fulfilment possible to man, it has no necessary connection with religion.

The basis of this art is the faith that a man by self-sculpture and by it alone can be Perfect. Without this faith the art cannot be successfully cultivated.

Without faith in the Perfection of his pattern, no sculptor can carve even a semblance of it in stone. Similarly, bringing the dispersive activities of the mind and the body under one guiding principle which integration of personality involves, is not possible till there is a ceaseless yearning to reach out to Perfection. This ideal can-

not be understood by intellect. Quivering emotion and a powerful effort of the imagination founded on faith, these only can give the artist the vision of Perfection which leads to a higher stage of self-fulfilment.

Perfection cannot remain an idea; it must be made a vivid, living force before the artist succeeds in sculpturing himself under its inspiration. This Perfection is styled "God". Often it is some human Prophet, *Guru* or Master.

The Westernistic mind is frightened of God. This fear must be successfully faced by everyone who wants to be an artist in self-sculpture.

This fear of believing in God was created by Westernism. European Renaissance which gave birth to this materialistic Culture turned to profane philosophy and science and derided the supremacy of the supra-physical order, intellectual, moral or spiritual.

As a result, it reduced knowledge to its lowest physical order, empirical and analytical. It thought of life not in terms of an internal co-ordination but only in terms of ceaseless restlessness inspired by greed and lust and fear and hate either personal or collective. It taught a craving for nothing more than the satisfaction of needs inherent in the material side of a man's nature. Its goal was not to reduce life to a harmony but to live it in fragments, thus dispersing personality into a multitude of contradictory facets.

Life to most of us in the modern world is either a bewildering struggle or a soulless acquiescence. But if we want to pursue the art of self-sculpture we must not be frightened by the bogey of negation. The faculty which Arjuna had of being filled with wonderment, of his body being thrilled with awe, of his soul being enriched by humi-

lity before the Grandeur that was God, must be cultivated. Nothing else will lend the grace which makes for self-fulfilment.

To a man claiming to be modern all talk about God is just a bore. He is willing to substitute for it some ruthless super-gangster, some national hero, some devoted friend or a lady love. He is willing to reduce his art to making crude clay models. He feels freer and easier without a super model, God. Like most amusing and intelligent people whom we meet in society he is not interested in anything so incapable of being sipped or danced with or betted on as God.

Such men are really afraid of God. If they do not believe in God they should have the intellectual honesty to try to bring Him into their life. If I have doubts whether my fan is working or not, I do not simply shut my eyes. I press the button to see if the fan works. I should like them to try God in a similar fashion. If He does not exist, it will not hurt them. If He does, well, they would have discovered a fresh outlook on life which they will share with all the great ones on earth.

It is very easy to try God if you have the will. All that you have to do is to sit down quietly and alone, take your mind off your normal activities, and press the button: Frankly, sincerely and humbly ask what God wants you to do. The reply will come. Obey the mandate next day, or, at any rate, try to ask again. Do this for a few days regularly. God will come into your life.

Any way it will be a first great stride in self-sculpture; a great steadying and inspiring performance.

Till God comes once again in the life of modern men, the world would not be saved.

## XVI

### THE SUPREME ARTISTS OF LIFE

God comes into a man's life only when he is ready to receive him. But the great masters, the supreme artists of life, men who have sculptured themselves as embodiments of power, beauty and inspiration are still there. All one has to do is to learn their art directly from them.

If there is one fascinating artist of life in history or mythology, he is Shri Ramachandra. His art was superb. It has illumined centuries, and if you read Valmiki's story of his life again and again, you will catch glimpses of this art. In his relations with his father, mother, stepmother, teacher, brothers, wife, friends and enemies and subjects, he brought a sweetness, grace and purity which have no parallel in biography or fiction. He was intensely human, and beautifully so.

Shri Ramachandra's relations with Sita were wonderful, so human and so sublime; an ethereal bond which transmuted sex-relation into a thing of beauty; a beacon light to all who look to the sanctity of home as the pivot of a perfect life. The popular notion that he discarded her because a washerman criticized his conduct has no foundation in fact. First, the whole incident does not find a place in the original Ramayana. Secondly, when it does find a place in the later additions to the work, it is different. Shri Ramachandra put away Sita after a conflict of emotions in pursuit of an overriding duty as king to

respect the wishes of his people. By this act he added the last great touch to his art of living.

A king who serves his people has no personal life of his own. The demands of public confidence are inexorable. Even modern Britain overruled her king's choice to marry the woman he loved, and removed him from the throne when he preferred private happiness to public duty.

In Shri Ramachandra's life as Valmiki has given it, every moment was inspired by the permanent values of Culture. His was the Life Beautiful, which alone brings heaven on earth.

The next and the greatest artist of life was Shri Krishna. His childhood was one beautiful lyric of loveliness; his youth was an epic of romance and achievements; his later life, a saga of far-visioned statesmanship and undying inspiration. As we read the *Bhagavata*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Harivamsha* we see before us the supreme creative artist of life-energy as the Master. Richly endowed with the human touch he stood above the limitations to which the flesh is heir to; self-integrated from birth; like Time, eternal and all-devouring, above all weaknesses and imperfections.

But more, he has left us the secret of the art of self-sculpture in the greatest educational text-book of the human race, the *Gita*. He is therefore called the Yogeshwara, the greatest among the master craftsmen of the art of self-sculpture, the World Teacher. As his life is inspiring, so is his message:

I. When a man concentrates all his powers to find out his innate Truth;

When he fuses his thought, word and deed to express himself on with the lines of his own truth;

When he trains himself to express his own Truth by word or deed or silence, fearlessly, in disregard of consequences, even at the cost of death, he attains the dynamic unity of his powers.

II. Having attained this unity when he tries to make every deed of his perfect;

When he casts out anxiety to secure results and is neither eager for victory nor afraid of defeat;

When he offers his every impulse, thought, word and deed as a votive offering to God;

When he overcomes, by constant self-discipline, greed and fear and lust and wrath;

When he works in life as a force of nature, unhasting and unresting;

When in doing so he surrenders himself to God and lives but as his instrument;

When he sees Him in all and all in Him, he becomes a supreme artist of life.

This process is nothing new, nothing alien. No achievement is possible in life without adopting somewhat of this discipline, however rudimentary the attempt may be. Unconsciously we stumble along this very path, while the true art is there for any one to learn. But in our shortsightedness we go on stumbling, trying to hew and chisel our nature in our own crude way with methods which are as absolute as those of the stone age.

The greatness of Shri Krishna, however, is not in teaching but in the richest and the most beautiful life, the life that he himself lived, the Life Triumphant.

With him stands Dvaipayana Vyas, the first of prophets, the prime architect of Aryan Culture. He is God and God is he, according to a well-known hymn. He is Brahma but without four faces; Vishnu but with two hands; Shambhu but without the third eye.

Vyas was descended from a long line of distinguished Aryan sages. His great-grandfather, Vasishtha, was an early seer of great reknown. He led the Tritsu army against Viskwamitra in the Battle of the Ten Kings recorded in the *Rigveda*. The Vasishthas were also the authors of a part of that Veda. Vasishtha's son was Shakti, his son was Parasara, the father of Vyas. He was, therefore, an heir to the noblest traditions of early Aryan Culture.

But he was the first among men who, in life, by conquest of human limitations, attained a complete integration of his personality. Shri Ramachandra and Shri Krishna, in their own respective way were born integrated personalities. They had not to struggle. But Vyas attained Perfection by self-sculpture. Hence he is called the greatest of Vitaragas, the first among those who have transcended human limitations.

But he was not merely the master of the art. He had a complete vision of integration and reduced the technique of attaining it to a science.

Power, achievement, riches, vigour and the true view of life, when attained in the fullest and lasting measure, makes for the Perfect Man.

These are attained only in accordance with the incapable, absolute and eternal Law which governs relations between mind and conduct in all beings in all ages and conditions.



**The law operates in the following manner:**

**Lasting power comes only to him who at all moments is true to himself, that is one in thought, word and deed:**

**Lasting riches only come to him who achieves absolute honesty;**

**Lasting vigour only comes to him who does not allow his powers physically and mentally to go waste.**

**A true view of life is given only to him who gives up all possessions.**

**The general view is that violence gives power; dispersal of faculties secures achievements; dishonesty yields riches; sex-indulgence yields creative vigour, and possessions provide the true end of life. That view is false and self-destructive. According to the Law, by the sacrifice of these commonly accepted means only can the objectives be really achieved.**

**The erroneous view of Perfection arises on account of three basic human limitations, viz., attachment, fear and repulsion.**

**When these limitations are transcended, all misery and weakness disappear and personality becomes completely integrated. Then Perfection is attained.**

**The supreme Art of Life lies, therefore, in progressively eliminating these three basic limitations from every thought, word and deed and attaining concentrated creative power.**

**Vyas was greater still, for he provided the instruments by which humanity can achieve this Art.**

**He was the greater literary artist the world has produced. He reduced the *Vedas* and saved for humanity its earliest recorded literature. He composed the Maha-**

bharata, an epic as wide, rich and inspiring as life itself. Its heroes and heroines throb with the perpetual conflict between elemental passions and permanent human values.

The Mahabharata is not a mere epic. It is the greatest creative factor in shaping and re-integrating Indian Culture. Its heroes and heroines have lived in men's imagination for centuries. Its approach has moulded outlook. Its idioms and figures of speech have worked their way into all Indian languages. Every stage and sphere of life has been provided; its episodes, its situations, ideals and wisdom so true of life that change cannot affect their appropriateness or beauty. And they have inspired every art, literature, thought and belief in every generation.

Indian Culture has lived and flourished and will continue to do so because of this mighty creation of Vyas.

His life was the Life Transcendent.

The other two supreme artists whom generations have worshipped as Divinity Himself and who attained the absolute integration of human personality are Buddha and Mahavira. Their creative art follows the same lines and the same pattern as Vyas's; the emphasis and expression only are different. Their life-spans fall within the historical period; their art of life is recorded in the reminiscences of men who had sat at the feet of the disciples of the Masters themselves. Every student of self-sculpture should study their lives.

They accepted the supremacy and inevitability of the Law of Moral Causation. They accepted the conquest of the three basic limitations, attachment, fear and repulsion as the true art of life. They accepted also the discipline which Yoga implies and found in absolute inte-

gration of the human personality the ultimate goal of self-sculpture. One called it Nirvana, the other Kaivalya.

Buddha's life was the Life Compassionate; Mahavira's, the Life Harmless.

The difference between these masters, however, lay in emphasising the highest expression of integration.

Shri Ramachandra found it in investing every human relation with grace and ethereal beauty.

Shri Krishna found it in the transformation of the individual human nature into an irresistible force through which the Divine will works.

Vyas found it in the conquest of the basic limitations of the human nature till it attained concentrated creativeness.

Buddha found it in transmuting human nature into an active and ceaseless will to benevolence.

Mahavira found it in transmuting it into a passive strength to inflict no injury.

In each case the art lay,—First, in stopping the dispersal of life-energy by bringing it under the direction of one active idea; Second, in integrating personality by overcoming greed and lust, fear and hate, by the mind attaining a wide calm which knew no misery; Third, merging the personality into Perfection which throbbed in tune with Universal Life.

## XVII

### THE MODERN MASTERS OF ART

This supreme Art of creative life did not remain in India as a remote memory. It was lived up to all parts by sages, ascetics and saints, poets and wandering minstrels. It was taught in religion and philosophy, in literature, folk-songs and royal edicts. Under different names it was accepted as the goal of life in courts, universities, temples, assemblies of the learned, among the romantics and the illiterate, in towns and villages. The whole outlook was influenced by it till Indian Culture took shape and became its organised church. Charvaka's philosophy, the ancient Indian form of Westernism, evoked contempt and disgust,—till, of course, the West came and made its practice popular under the name of civilisation.

Of the masters who kept alive the tradition of this creative art from Yajnavalkya to Swami Narayan this is scarcely the place to speak. But the influence of the *Gita*, the first text-book of this Art, can be traced century after century in later additions, to the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas*, the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavata*, the *Ramacharita Manas*, the *Abhangas* of Tukaram, the *Grantha Sahib*; in the adaptation of teachings in treatises, poems, folk-songs, in words, idioms and proverbs.

During the last hundred years, in spite of Westernistic influence, it is being largely practised and has thrown up five great masters who have reintegrated our Culture and built up a fresh tradition.

This is not the place for setting out what these modern masters said or did but I only want to indicate how they practised the art of life.

Of the modern Masters, Swami Dayananda Saraswati is the first in time.

He had no attachment, no personal life, no fear. He braved poison and snakes and the knife of the assassin. He faced abuse, calumny and violence with undaunted courage, and a spotless life; and the concentrated vigour of a complete consecration to his mission. He had no malice, but his flaming indignation was like scorching lava, which burnt up untruth and things which stifled the soul of India.

The Swami's wonderful gifts were brought under the direction of one idea, to restore the primitive Aryan strength and virility to Indian Culture. He was learned beyond the measure of man. He was a master of thundering eloquence. Ceaselessly he worked, travelling all over India, radiating intense creative vigour; a powerful human dynamo, physically, mentally and spiritually. He was the first among moderns who lived and taught others to live upto the permanent values of our Culture. He gave us the first programme of Cultural reintegration, most of which has now been associated with Nationalism; removal of caste distinction and untouchability, and; equality of women; highest scientific education grafted on an education essentially Indian; the use of national language and the pursuit of Sanskrit as a predominant national influence; repudiation of Westernism; re-organisation of life on a basis of freedom as in Vedic times and a sturdy resistance against foreign rule and alien culture. India, Madame Blavatsky said, saw no greater scholar,

metaphysician, orator and denunciator of evil since Shankaracharya.

As a representative of the creative art of life in modern times he stands supreme; a spirit of titanic stature through which worked the force of an immense creative power.

Another master was Dayanand's contemporary, who practised his art under entirely different conditions. Ramakrishna was an illiterate Brahman from an obscure village in Bengal and spent his life as an assistant priest in the temple of Kali at Dakshineshwar.

Indian Culture, which, as we saw, stood for the supremacy of the spirit over the matter and an art of life which stood for absolute integration of the personality, was at a discount. Westernism had hypnotised the educated in the land into submission. Rationalism, borrowed from Europe, had converted scepticism, a denial of faith, into a new religion, undermining faith in the supreme art of creative life-energy which the ancient Master had lived and taught.

But the illiterate boy mastered the Art which Shri Krishna and Vyas had practised. 'Abandon that you may possess'—his life proclaimed. In the compound of the temple, sitting in his shabby old room, he mastered violence and untruth, dishonesty and sexual impulse, and the sense of possession. Greed and lust and fear and hate, the basic limitations, fell from him. He lived in God; God lived in him. He broke the barriers of selfhood and in ecstatic experience contacted Him who was in everyone and in Whom was everyone. All beings were to him manifestations of one God and he loved them in life.

He lived often in *samadhi* and had the vision of Kali and Shri Krishna. He lived as a devout Muslim and saw

the vision of the Prophet. He lived as a Christian and had the vision of Christ. In the art of life which he cultivated he realised that the masters, irrespective of race and land, had followed but one Art and no other.

This artist achieved results only by the strength of the creative force which worked through him. He yearned for pupils, and they came. He yearned that the truth he had found, should once again be taught to the world, and it was taught. He wanted to give validity to the art of life for which India had stood, and he gave it not only to India, but to the world.

Swami Vivekananda and the Ramkrishna Mission, Shri Aravinda and his teachings are but his specific legacies. But the legacy of faith which he gave to India and the world is an unique vindication of *Sanatana Dharma* and a fresh message of life to the world darkened by the shadows of Westernism. He of the great moderns, rediscovered God, lived in Him and gave Him back to us as the most precious possession of man.

Swami Vivekananda, the great pupil of Shri Ramakrishna, is the next master. He was a college student in a modern university, surrounded by Westernistic influences. But he came in contact with Shri Ramakrishna and was initiated by him into the Art. After his death, Vivekananda, then a sanyasi, dedicated himself to translating the messages of Indian Culture to all mankind.

In the august Parliament of World Religions held in Chicago in the Hall of Columbus, in 1893, sat the highest prelates of Western religions, rich in possession and the prestige of their respective nations. Men and women were collected to hear these authorities on religion—persons to whom India was but a dark, uncivilised continent which Britain was civilising.

In the midst of this world gathering sat an obscure, young man, penniless and unknown; without the halo of accepted religious dignity; in ochre-coloured clothes, which evoked a smile of ridicule; unaccustomed to public speaking. He had only one strength, his master's heritage; but one inspiration, the message of Indian Culture.

He stood up to speak, this unknown, unapplauded stranger. But he felt that he was the instrument of God. He spoke of the universal message of Bharata, the supreme Art of Shri Krishna, Vyas and Buddha: 'Man is to become Divine by realising the Divine'. He wanted to sound the death-knell to all fanaticism, to all persecution with the sword or the pen. He pleaded for a union of the spirit of Hinduism with the humanising power of Buddhism; for realizing the spirit which was common to all religions.

The next moment the august assembly was at his feet. He became, as a leading American paper said the next day, 'the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions'.

In America, they lionised him and wanted him to stay with them. But his heart was with India. "Oh! Mother," He cried, "What do I care for name and fame when my Motherland remains sunk in poverty".

He had Western education. He had sat at the feet of the great master who in modern times had represented the Idea round which Indian Culture had been revolving. He had learnt from him the supreme Art of self-sculpture. Having done so, he interpreted it to the West. And having seen the best in Europe and America, he gave her Culture back to India, reintegrated and vitalised.

He had no love for the abstract. He wanted the spirit of Aryan Culture to enter everyday life. He want-



ed no mythology; he wanted no bewildering yogic cults. He wanted them to harness Yoga to practical psychology.

“We, as a nation, have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and raise the masses”, he said, and saw in the new Indian nationalism a modern aspect of re-integrated Indian Culture.

He was no longer a mere *yogi*. In redemptive activities he saw the fulfilment of the art of life which he represented. And at last he became the instrument of God. “Since I heard the Divine Voice,” he said “I have ceased making any more plans. Let these things be as Mother wills.”

## XVIII

### TWO LIVING MASTERS

I will not speak at length of Shri Aravinda and Mahatma Gandhi. One was a distant inspiration of my youth, the other is a proximate inspiration of my present. I will not speak of their teachings, nor of their deeds. Both these masters are the finest living products of Aryan Culture and each in his way is an architect of its modern re-integration.

Aravinda is a great artist of life. He has risen above the basic limitations, become the vehicle of Divine Will, wise and far-seeing. Gandhiji has harnessed the basic limitations, and worked as God's instrument, creative and uplifting.

Shri Aravinda following Shri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is *Yogi*—a great living adept of this supreme art. Gandhiji, nearer to Dayananda, is a *Karma Yogi* 'master of the perfect act'—in fact the one of the greatest *Karma Yogis* of all time. Both are the two greatest living exponents of the Moral Order. Both are masters of the art of self-sculpture; both are dynamic forces challenging the darkness which is Westernism. No one can study the art of creative life better than by tracing the struggles and the self-discipline through which they have been winning their way to increasing perfection.

Shri Aravinda's works contain the most comprehensive survey of re-integrated Indian Culture. He followed up

Vivekanand's attempts at transmuting *Sanatana Dharma* into a dynamic Indian nationalism. To art and literature, to religion and thought, to the art of life and to Indian Culture he has given a fresh vigour and outlook.

The Idea which both these masters embody is the Central Idea of the Indian Culture, viz., to achieve Absolute Integration of the human personality.

The idea behind Sanskritic studies is to find the perfect expression for the Idea and these masters have prosecuted those studies.

The idea behind *Chāturvarnya* is to find a permanent synthesis of social orders based on nature and duties, not on birth, in order that those who represent the Idea should be the teachers and the guides of men. And they have re-integrated the idea to suit modern times.

The idea behind the *Mahavratas*, the Great Vows, Non-violence, Truth, Non-stealing, Non-waste and Non-possession is to place the Moral Order on the changeless basis of an inevitable law of causation. And they have upheld the Law.

Beyond their effort lies, Yoga, the process, by whatever name called, by which human personality can attain absolute and permanent integration and in which attachment, fear and wrath, have been mastered. This integration has not been a matter of logic, not of arrogant ignorance which Westernism has enshrined as Reason. It was, with them, a matter of faith and of experience born of it. It came to them for they surrendered themselves to God, and lived and moved only to be His instruments. Their goal of life is the Absolute Integration of human personality.

Indian Culture lives, for, in all ages such great Indians have lived the Idea. It lives, for, they have been truly great only because they have so lived it.

Gandhiji today is the architect of the great Indian nation. He alone can say "India, a nation—I am it." Why is it so? Because his words and deeds evoke loyalty in millions of Indian hearts. The source of this power is that he commands the Collective Unconscious of Indians as few before him have done.

If the secret of this power is analysed it will be found not merely in statesmanship or intellectual equipment. There are some in India who are his equals, if not superiors in the matter of this equipment. The secret is in the art of creative life-energy of which he is a master-craftsman. It is in his life and outlook, which by unceasing efforts he has made typically Indian; in the high moral tension at which he maintains the atmosphere redolent with the *Gita* and the *Ramayana*; which surrounds him; in his lifelong attempt to live in the light of the Eternal Law, in the spirit of surrender to God which integrates his personality.

He, like the sun, first absorbs the imperceptible moisture of Indian Culture; then gives it back to us with living freshness as a fog and rain. This, what he absorbs and returns and what we share with the great Indians of the past are the absolute and permanent values of Indian Culture. They form the common element between us and him and between Indians of today and of all the yesterdays and tomorrows. It is this bond between him and us which makes for the compact and vigorous nationhood of India.

This Art which these masters follow and the way of life it prescribes are *sanatana*, for it is not parochial, nor

restricted to an age, but eternal and inevitable. It knows no difference of race or country. It is based on something fundamental in human nature. It is *Dharma*, for it upholds the whole existence, both individual and social. It is **Aryan Culture**.

Firstly, because the Aryans, of all mankind, found it, gave it a shape and meaning and left it as a message of undying strength;

Secondly, because, it was first practised and perfected in *Āryāvarta*.

It is Indian Culture, for India is *Āryāvarta*, for, here it has grown, thriven and been preserved. Here, it has moulded life and social movements. Here, it has been lived by great men who have found the highest self-fulfilment in expressing its ideas and forging the collective will in their light.

The Art which these masters have cultivated is Indian in the sense that they were all born in India, drew inspiration from the fundamentals of Aryan Culture and were the architects of the life and culture of the India of their day. It is Indian, for India has no future except as its expression.

But the Art is open to every one who learns it.

All education as a creative art flows from this supreme Art. It shapes the man as long as he follows it with faith and zest.

In the beginning, Arjun is a humble pupil, humility itself. He is diffident as all pupils in the beginning of their career are and ought to be. His Teacher tells him that the sense of frustration is un-Aryan. Then He teaches him how to know, how to do and how to "be". He

gives him the technique of training himself to perfection, a technique which can be used in every walk of life.

This Art is not intended to secure the benefits of the other world. It does not bring mere religious or spiritual good. It brings in this life the highest and which makes life worth living, the joy of self-fulfilment.

The Teacher, at the end, says "Consider well what I have told thee. Then, as thou wilt, so act,"

The Pupil replies "By Thy grace my perplexity is gone; I have gained the Truth; I stand firm and my doubts have fled: I will do as Thou biddest."

To teach this Art to the rising generations is the end of Creative Education and, in reality, of all true education.

## XIX

### THE EFFECTIVE EXPRESSION OF CULTURE

Bhāratiya Shiksha, while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training, must teach the student not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.

This object lays emphasis on four different corollaries arising from the foregoing principles.

The first is that emphasis on formative education should not lead the teacher to ignore scientific and technical training. Education, if it is the creative art of self-sculpture, is also a means of social adjustment. Its products, therefore, must have the latest equipment and skill to deal with the problems of their age. They have to live in their times and serve their country and the world with the best weapons available. Education as a creative art shapes the man to perfection; but even the Perfect has to deal with environments. In doing so they cannot be behind others in matters relating to material equipment.

The second corollary formulates the approach to Change, which Westernism considers the principal element in life. Creative Education has its characteristic

outlook on Change. The Central Idea must pass through a series of sheaths to maintain its vitality. Even souls have to pass through different bodies. Mere change of externals is, however, no salvation. At the same time, a refusal to change the externals is strangulation.

In a balanced scheme of self-fulfilment Change has a place as much as Tradition. Tradition, the persistence of forms and the continuity of institutional life, is a necessity of life. On the other hand, Change imposes the need for reintegration of Culture which keeps it fresh and vigorous.

At the same time, sweeping or swift change which stifles the Central Idea or which shapes the continuity of Culture is death.

Creative Education, thus formulates the relation between Change and Tradition;

First, No ancient form or attitude should be sacrificed to passion for change;

Second, No form or attitude should be retained if it could be replaced by another which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of the Culture.

The old world must change but the new world must not cease to be the effective expression of our Culture.

This is the secret of re-integration. This is the secret of the alchemy which all masters who have built on firm foundation, have taught; the secret of Dayanand and Ramakrishna, of Vivekanand, Aravinda and Gandhiji.

The fourth and final corollary is that Culture cannot be possessed or inherited. It can only be recaptured for each man for himself and his generation. Each young man, like Vivekananda, Aravinda and Gandhiji, should



study the past, absorb Indian Culture and try to live in the light of modern needs and equipments. In this way Indian Culture will not be a local tradition, not merely a national outlook but a world force wherewith to redeem humanity.

We cannot, even if we will, change the permanent values which flow from the Central Idea of our Culture. For India has to resist the decadent Westernistic influence which oppresses the world, and to lead humanity to the higher, deeper and wider life of the spirit.

The resurgence of Asia has to be achieved. Humanity, which is in the grip of force and fraud and a regimentation based on a denial of human dignity, has to be weaned away from Westernism.

This can only be done by India, free and great, which is a true embodiment of her Culture.

Indian Education must prepare men and women fit for their task. It must make them Bharatīya, in spirit and outlook, true to the Motherland, striving ceaselessly for the integration of their own personality and prepared for the day when the world would learn from them the rudiments of the supreme Art of life-energy taught by the Masters.

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